

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 5-10, 14-19, 23-28, and 32-36 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 7, 8, 10, 16, 17, 19, 25, 26, 28, 34, and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. patent 6,108,492 to Miyachi. Claims 5, 6, 9, 14, 15, 18, 23, 24, 27, 32, 33, and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Miyachi in view of U.S. patent 5,414,494 to Aikens et al. (herein "Aikens").

Addressing now the prior art rejections based on Miyachi, and further in view of Aikens, those rejections are traversed by the present response.

The claims are amended by the present response to clarify features recited therein. First, the claims now clarify that the image forming device has "network access". That subject matter is believed to be clear from the original specification, see for example Figure 1 showing a system with image forming devices having network access.

The claims now also clarify that the monitoring unit or operation monitors selecting of the plurality of operations of the operation panel of the user "including monitoring at least one of a sequence, timing, or frequency of selecting of the plurality of operations". That subject matter is believed to be fully supported for example in Figure 25 in the present specification. As shown for example in Figure 25, and as discussed in the present specification at page 35, line 30 et seq., characteristics that can be monitored include a "Command Name Timing", which will track a key pressed and the timing that is pressed, thereby recording a sequence that operations are selected, a "Timing" and a "Frequency" of the operation selected.

The features clarified in the claims are believed to clearly distinguish over the applied art.

Addressing first the primary reference to Miyachi, Miyachi first does not disclose or suggest an image forming apparatus having network access. Miyachi shows in Figure 1 the MFP 110a connected to a host 110b to a SCSI; but no network access is shown in Miyachi. As a result of such a structure in Miyachi the status of the MFP 110a can only be sent to the host 110b.

Further, with respect to the further added limitation of the monitoring “including monitoring at least one of a sequence, timing, or frequency of selecting of the plurality of operations”, that feature is believed to even further distinguish over Miyachi.

Miyachi, in contrast to the claimed features, is merely directed to being able to store status conditions of a multi-function device. However, does Miyachi not disclose or suggest monitoring a selection of a plurality of operations on an operation panel by a user including monitoring at least one of a sequence, timing, or frequency of selecting of the plurality of operations.

The claims are directed to a system, method, and computer program product that allows monitoring of how a user selects operations on an operation panel of an image forming device. That is, an image forming device includes an operation panel that has plural operations to be selected by a user. Those operations, as non-limiting examples, relate to selection of a number of copies, copy conditions, paper size selection, etc. An operation in the claimed invention is to monitor the selection of those operations by a user. That is, the claims are directed to monitoring when a user selects, e.g., a paper size operation, when the user selects a copy number operation, etc. One objective of the present invention is to monitor such data so that a user's usage of an operation panel can be evaluated, so that the setup, layout, control, etc. of an operation panel of an image forming device can be improved.

Miyachi does not disclose or suggest any monitoring of operations on an operation panel of an image forming device that a user selects.

The outstanding rejection cites Miyachi to disclose monitoring the selecting of the plurality of operations on the operation panel at column 5, lines 57-65. However, applicants respectfully submit those disclosures in Miyachi do not correspond to the claimed features.

At column 5, lines 27-30 Miyachi discloses that the multifunction peripheral includes a user input device 285 with button switches. However, the monitoring referred to at column 5, lines 57-65 in Miyachi is not directed to monitoring selections of those button switches, and particularly one of a sequence, timing, or frequency of selecting those buttons. More specifically, at column 5, lines 57-65 Miyachi discloses monitoring the conditions of the multifunction peripheral and updating a status information table such as Table 1 shown in columns 6-7. However, Miyachi does not disclose or suggest monitoring which button switches are selected by a user. In fact, in reviewing Table 1 in Miyachi all the status information stored therein is directed to different status indications of the device itself, but is not directed to which selections on an operation panel a user selects. Miyachi merely discloses monitoring different status conditions of the device, but does not disclose or suggest monitoring which buttons on an operation panel a user selects.

Even more specifically, at column 5, lines 57-65 Miyachi refers to “monitoring the condition of the MFP and updating a status information table”. Miyachi does not disclose or suggest the claimed features of monitoring an input sequence of a selection of operations on an operation panel of a user, and such information is in fact of no interest to the device of Miyachi. Table 1 of Miyachi contains status conditions “[User] key original document size selection” and “[User] key paper size selection”. However, Miyachi does not disclose or suggest, nor have any reason, to monitor the sequence, timing, or frequency of selections of operations selected by a user. For example in Miyachi if a change is made from an original document size from 11 x 17 to letter size and a paper size selection from letter size to 11 x 17 or size enlargement, the input sequence and frequencies are not at all tracked.

In such ways, Miyachi is not directed to a device even similar to the claimed invention.

Moreover, no teachings in Aikens were cited with respect to the above-noted features, nor are any teachings in Aikens believed to cure the above discussed deficiencies of Miyachi.

In view of the presently submitted claim amendments and foregoing comments, Applicants respectfully submit the claims as currently written distinguish over the applied art.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



James J. Kulbaski
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 34,648

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 06/04)
JJK/SNS:sjh

Surinder Sachar
Registration No. 34,423